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# NORTHERN CAREERS PROGRAM



Public Service Commission  
of Canada

Commission de la Fonction publique  
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Cat. No. SC3-63

ISBN 0-662-10410-2

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The Program, approved by the Treasury Board in July 1974, is sponsored by the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs and is operated and administered by the Public Service Commission of Canada.

While native people constitute more than 50 per cent of the population of the North, it has long been recognized that only 20 per cent hold full and part-time public service jobs, and less than 10 per cent have regular, permanent occupations. Because most jobs held by native people have been in the support staff categories, such as clerical, janitorial and stenographic jobs, the Government of Canada introduced the Program to enable native people to become more equally represented. The Program provides an opportunity for individuals to develop their talents in order to gain access to middle and senior management positions where they can influence the growth, direction and policy-making decisions of the North.

## INTRODUCTION

Ethel Chalifoux, Paul Panegyuk and Sue Heron are Indian, Inuit and Metis people living and working in Yellowknife. Betty Vincent and Louise Ford are northern native people working in Whitehorse. They are not aiming for just temporary or part-time jobs. They are aiming at life-long careers. Ethel is training to be a Finance Officer. Paul is training to be a Wildlife Technician. Sue is hoping to study environmental law. Betty is training as a Personnel Officer and Louise is on assignment with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police as one part of her training to become a Parole or Probation Officer. They all have one thing in common: participation in the Northern Careers Program.

This booklet is written therefore for you, the northern native person, to help you find out exactly what the Program offers, how you may become involved, and the opportunities open to you to pursue the career you have always wanted.



## WHO MAY PARTICIPATE

The Program is open to all adult Status and Non-Status Indians, Inuit and Metis peoples of both sexes who were born in either the Yukon or the Northwest Territories, and have always lived in either Territory with the exception of temporary absences either for health or education reasons. Other native people may qualify if they have lived in either Territory for at least five continuous years before making an application to join the Program. The Program is not open to individuals of any other cultural background other than northern native Canadians.

The unique feature of the Program is that, once you have chosen the career you wish to follow, the education and training experience you receive is designed specifically to meet your needs at a pace you are able to handle, with goals matched to your own desires.

## PROCEDURE

The first step in joining the Program is to contact the Program offices in either Yellowknife or Whitehorse. An Assignment Counsellor will want to meet you to discuss your educational background, the employment experience you've already had, the career you've chosen or, if you're undecided, the kind of work you like doing and think you'd like to pursue. If the Program cannot help you, the Counsellor will direct you to an agency that can. If the Program can help you, then you are invited to take part in a Career Planning Process.

## CAREER PLANNING

Not all the participants know what they want to do when they join. Career Planning Sessions are held to help you find out more about yourself, the Program, the work of the Federal Government in the North, and job opportunities and locations.

Like other participants, you'll find that the sessions encourage you to explore your own career aspirations, meet other newcomers, and exchange ideas about your futures and how the Program can help. Self-exploration sessions will help you examine your feelings about yourself, your work, your achievements and your skills. You will learn more about potentials you didn't know you had, and you will be prompted to think about various occupations in which your talents may be developed and fulfilled. If you are already sure about your career goal, you'll find the experience valuable in helping you consider all the different ways your goals can be achieved.

Sometimes, when participants are unsure of what they want to do, they become involved in career-exploration assignments. These are brief working experiences that expose you to other occupations and help you discover exactly what is involved.



## CAREER OUTLINES

Making a decision about exactly what you want to do is probably one of the most important decisions you'll ever make. Your Assignment Counsellor will discuss it fully with you and help you plan your career outline.

A career outline is a summary of your career goal and includes the main steps you must take to achieve your objective. When Sue Heron joined the Program, she knew that a great deal of her training in law would involve attending University and then gaining on-the-job experience.

All these activities were planned in her career outline.

## TRAINING ASSIGNMENTS

Depending on your career goal, your training assignments may include formal education at a Community College, Technical School or University, and on-the-job training. Like most participants, you may receive from three to six assignments while you are in the Program. Each assignment varies in length according to several factors: your own career goal; your background, interests and aptitude; the level of qualification required; and



the expectations of prospective employers both within all levels of government and, if applicable, in the private sector. Because of these various assignments, your participation in the Program may last up to five years.

The purpose of each assignment is to help you gain progressively more experience in order to achieve your final goal. The assignments are organized by the Northern Careers Officers, with the co-operation of each supervisor in the individual host department who not only provides you with valuable on-the-

job experience but benefits from your input into the workload and functions of the department itself.

In order to specify the purpose of each assignment — its duration, objectives, working conditions and responsibilities — an agreement is drawn up and signed by you, your immediate supervisor in the host department, and Northern Careers representatives. While you are on assignment, your salary and staff-year are provided by the Public Service Commission of Canada.



Some public service positions are naturally oriented to the cultural background of native people. According to Arnie Goodman of the Canadian Wildlife Service, ". . . as we get native people who are from the North involved with . . . management programs, they are more willing to want to stay in the North because it's already their home. It gives us a more suitable manpower to deal with . . . people who can more readily understand the attitudes and . . . everyday operations in the north to a better extent than . . . people coming from the South . . ."

Similar situations are found in other Government areas. Conrad Pilon is the Territorial Manager of the Job Creation Branch. He is responsible for programs such as Young Canada Works, the Local Employment Assistance Program and the Summer Job Corps. "We need to hire native people to deliver the programs we have. We need people who have worked with native organizations and communities."

Like Arnie and Conrad, many public and private managers recognize that native people have unique qualities and talents that are an asset to their individual departments and that cannot be provided by the non-native working force. Participants like John Tees, a Metis, are equally aware of the unique nature of their cultures: "I am proud of that heritage and am seeking my identity and where I fit in the scheme of the world. I want to find out more about what that means.



I have come closer to that through my involvement with Northern Careers."

When on assignment, you could find yourself working in one of the following organizations.

**Federal Government Departments:**

- Communications
- Energy, Mines and Resources
- Fisheries and Environment
- Indian and Northern Affairs
- Justice
- Employment and Immigration Commission
- National Defence
- Health and Welfare
- National Revenue



Post Office  
Public Service Commission  
Public Works  
Solicitor-General (R.C.M.P. and  
National Parole Service  
Transport

#### **Agencies outside the Federal Government:**

Territorial Governments  
Native Organizations  
Private firms  
Universities  
Other educational institutions  
Crown agencies such as the Canadian  
Broadcasting Corporation

#### **EVALUATION**

Both during and at the end of each assignment, your progress will be evaluated to see whether you are achieving your objectives and if you're ready to compete for a permanent position, or whether you need to alter your training program in any way. Whenever you have any doubts, your counsellor is always there to assist, advise and suggest ideas. If, from your evaluations and your own feelings about your progress, you want to change the direction of your career, you can do so. You'll most likely need to reconstruct your career outline so that you can move in your new direction efficiently and with a clear plan of how you're going to achieve your new goal.

#### **GRADUATION**

Graduation from the Northern Careers Program does not involve any form of conventional examination. Your gradu-



tion will mean that you have prepared yourself to the point where you have successfully competed for the position described in your career goal. In keeping with the Program's self-initiating philosophy, you're ready to leave Northern Careers on your own accord.

Northern Careers does not guarantee your employment. Each individual must compete with everyone else for a position according to the terms set for specific openings.

In the words of Ethel Chalifoux, "When I finish [at Algonquin College], I'll train in another financial office and continue training as a Finance Officer until I win a competition for that." Like Ethel, all



participants are aware that the Federal Government recruits employees on a competitive basis according to the merit principle. The candidate must meet the basic requirements and actually win a competition for the position.

Personal assets — your background, interests, appearance, personality, attitude and enthusiasm — are all factors that may influence potential employers when you compete for a vacant position. Self-esteem, confidence, eagerness and a sprinkling of modesty are universal qualities that can be the difference between being a potential candidate and a successful one anywhere!

Northern Careers will prepare you for job interviews. You'll be encouraged to approach the Personnel Staffing section to find out the scope of the interview and to obtain any valuable information. You'll be encouraged to visit the working area where the vacancy exists and find out as much as possible about the nature of the position, and its requirements and responsibilities, so that you can prepare yourself thoroughly for related questions during the actual interview.

Being unsuccessful at an interview doesn't mean failure. The Program encourages you to see these experiences as valuable parts of your overall training period that prepare you for future opportunities.

## SALARIES

Throughout your involvement with the Northern Careers Program, you'll be paid

a salary under the Northern Careers Pay Plan. Salaries are based on the range of the Clerical and Regulatory Group and include a system of annual performance pay if you have made significant progress toward your career goal.

The salary level and rate of increase is set by the Northern Careers Appointment Board. Whenever the salary rates are adjusted as a result of collective agreements, your salary will be increased accordingly.

Each participant's salary is set according to the individual's education and experience. Salary scales vary enormously, and range from \$7,035 (Grade 8 educational level with less than three years' progressively responsible working experience) to \$17,762 (University undergraduate degree level with three years' progressively responsible working experience).

Throughout your stay with the Program, you are an employee of the Public Service Commission of Canada and therefore entitled to all public service benefits.

## TRANSFERS

If you are already working for the Government, you can transfer into the Northern Careers Program. Lucy Marquand found out about the Program from her supervisor in Ottawa. "That's where I was stationed before I came to Yellowknife. I asked for a transfer and if I could stay with the Federal Government."



To participate in the Northern Careers Program, Lucy transferred from Cultural and Linguistic Services in Ottawa to Northern Careers in Yellowknife and was then assigned to the Information Unit of the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs.

When you transfer into the Program you will retain your salary, group, level and benefits that you have already been enjoying as an employee in the public service.

## OPPORTUNITIES

For the majority of the participants, the Program is proving to be extremely beneficial in opening up opportunities and providing experiences that would

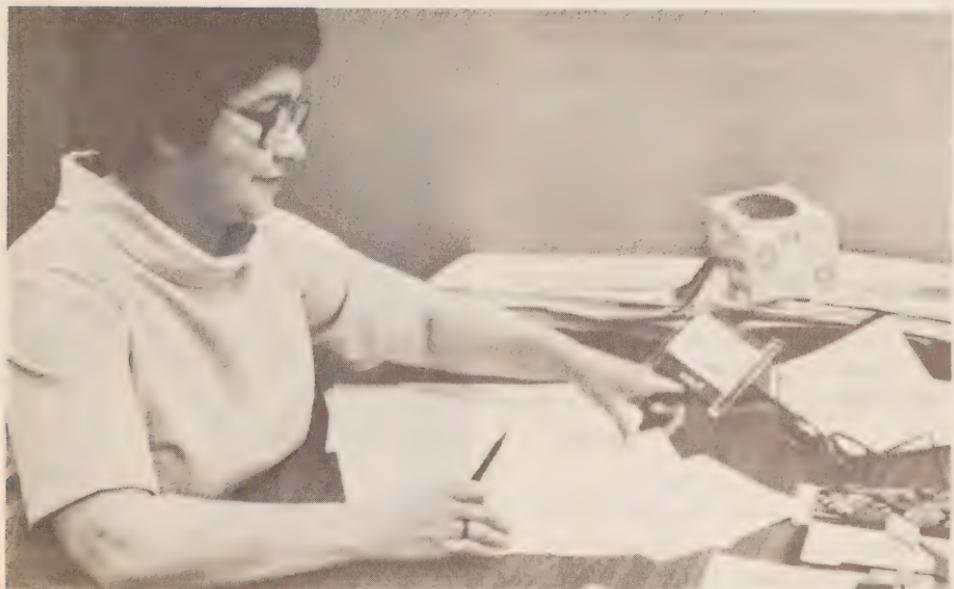
otherwise have been unavailable.

"I wouldn't be able to do what I'm doing if the Program was not available," explains Louise Ford; "I wouldn't be able to go back to school, support my children and go into a career on my own without help."

"I thought it was just too good to be true," recalls Betty Vincent. "I don't think I would have got this chance this late in life. It's a great opportunity to train. I always wanted a career . . .".

## TRAVEL

Participating in Northern Careers often means travelling in order to acquire the education and experience required to



achieve career goals. The Finance Administration Section of the Program makes all airflight and hotel reservations, and arranges payments on your behalf. Travel advances are authorized to cover necessary expenses while travelling on approved business.

## HOUSING

If you have to move from an outer community to a centre where you can participate in the Program, housing units are available for rent. Each unit is allotted according to your family's needs and the availability of vacant homes at the time of your application. Shortage of housing is sometimes a problem but it may be possible to arrange leases of property, depending on the situation.

Rental rates vary with housing units, and your rent will be deducted from your salary cheque. Naturally, you must be responsible for any damage to the property and must agree to care for the unit as you would your own home.

The housing units are maintained by the Department of Public Works whose personnel check the units for safety and preventive maintenance, and answer any calls concerning defective appliances, plumbing, etc.

## THE FUTURE

The Northern Careers Program is designed to help native people living in the North equip themselves for further career development within the Federal Public Service.



Not everyone, of course, wants a highly responsible managerial position. If your goal is to achieve expertise in the technical support or clerical positions you most enjoy, the Program may help you. The opportunity to develop from there, of course, is always open should your goals change and should you want the chance to qualify for a position of higher authority. In this event, any ground-floor experience will prove extremely valuable since some managerial positions, particularly those of a technical nature, require a working knowledge of this operational level.

But whatever your goal, the success and future security of the Program is dependent upon one thing — the success with which you and other participants achieve your career objectives and aspirations.

As Darryl Bohnet explains, "It's extremely important that the Program continues to exist. It's one of the . . . positive steps the government has done to educate people and get them into middle and senior management positions in the North."

John Tees feels the same way. "The Program gave me an opportunity to think about a career in a serious manner in the long term. I would encourage any native person who feels that he would like to pursue a career to join this Program."

Achieving your career goal is just the beginning. Your qualifications and experience may equip you to seek posi-



tions not only in the North but in various regional centres where the major decisions are often made concerning your land, your people, your culture and the nation's resources.

There is no better time than now to structure your life and become involved in a satisfying and stimulating career of your own choosing in which you can develop your talents, abilities and potentials to their fullest.

### **WHY JOIN THE PROGRAM?**

Not just for the sake of a job. Or an employer. Or the Northern Careers Program.

For yourself.



To obtain more information, please  
contact:

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